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Searching For Capable Bureaucrats

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Searching for Capable Bureaucrats

An Abstract

The ascent to power of a Democratic administration promoting the value of government activism has generated questions about the ability of the federal bureaucracy to execute expanded missions. Bureaucracy is associated in the public mind with inefficiency and wastefulness. This public image, in combination with such factors as low pay and ineffective recruiting, has discouraged the best talent graduating from college each year from seeking employment in the public sector. This paper examines the increasing difficulty the government is having in attracting quality employees and offers recommendations for improvement.

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SEARCHING FOR CAPABLE BUREAUCRATS

INTRODUCTION

To be labeled as a bureaucrat is today synonymous to being called incompetent. Rather than applying this term as a relatively benign job description, the media and numerous politicians call to mind insensitive drones motivated solely by job security and the promise of a well paid early retirement. In reviewing the index of The Washington Post articles for 1991, for example, I found the following lone entry under bureaucracy: "See Red Tape".

This unfavorable portrayal of the public service is dramatically different from the view of government held as recently as three decades ago. In the spirit of Franklin Roosevelt, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations actively employed the federal bureaucracy in efforts to remedy society's and the world's ills. Succeeding administrations, however, attempted to emasculate the federal bureaucracy and initiated the practice of bureaucrat bashing. Several presidents personally bemoaned the intrusive and inefficient nature of government.

This negative image of the public service has undesirable consequences for the United States. Regardless of whether there are actually competent personnel formulating and executing national policy, the fact that many Americans believe that their

government is inept is significant and disconcerting. What caliber of people would want to work for such an organization? Our best and brightest may not.

In this paper I will search for the answer to this central issue: Is the government recruiting quality people, and if not, what measures must be taken to enable it to do so? The response is crucial, for we cannot lead the world if our budget analysts, trade negotiators, educators, AIDS researchers, and air traffic controllers are less than capable.

In pursuing this topic I will first discuss the role of the federal bureaucracy in the United States in recent administrations. This is done with the intent of developing the theme that America's view of its public servants is a crucial determinant of the government's ability to attract superior recruits. I will then conduct a detailed review of the current state of bureaucracy in this country, discussing its public image and its competency in executing its functions, and then focus upon an evaluation of its recruiting efforts. My conclusion will center on feasible reforms that would ensure public service recruits top people.

THE ROLE OF AMERICA'S CIVIL SERVICE

Bureaucratic Tradition

Americans have never respected the civil servant as an elite and highly trained professional. As stated by R. Shep Melnick, "Few elements of American political culture are as well entrenched as fear and loathing of bureaucracy" (1991, p. 166).

This fear and loathing can be accounted for upon examination of the roots of our national bureaucracy. In "In Search of a Role: America's Higher Civil Service", Hugh Heclo (1984) points out that our national civil service was founded and developed long after the basic constitutional framework of the United States had been established. Political patronage was the governing principle for appointment and advancement until the first civil service laws became effective in the 1880s.

Bureaucrats thus became part of American political culture in a manner that has left them "detached from the accepted structure of American political institutions" (p11). This detachment has helped contribute to bureaucracy's insecurity about its role in American government and has served as a basis for popular antagonism towards bureaucrats. In short, bureaucracy seems to be a political afterthought, and its legitimacy as a political institution has not been fully accepted by the public.

Recent History

Bureaucracy's detachment from the political mainstream and its search for a proper role is reflected in how it has been

employed by the President in recent administrations. There has been a marked contrast in the way Chief Executives have utilized civil servants, ranging from activism to hostile neglect.

The Roosevelt, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations were striking for their belief that government is good. Arthur Schlesinger described Roosevelt's Washington as being "deluged with an endless stream of bright young men" (cited by Heilemann, 1990, p. 40). Kennedy likewise energized the country with his vision of a New Frontier and his statement "Let public service be a proud and lively career" (cited by Heilemann, 1990, p. 40). This philosophy was manifested in "affirmative government" (Novak, 1992, p26) practiced by Kennedy, and by Lyndon Johnson in his Great Society programs.

This positive role, and corresponding image, of government has declined markedly since Johnson's term. Bureaucracy had obviously flourished under the previous Democratic chief executives, and President Nixon concluded that it was an asset to the Democratic Party and would only frustrate his goals and objectives (Aberbach & Rockman, 1990).

By the early 1970's government was still aggressively implementing the ambitious social programs of the Great Society. This positive approach to government soon changed, however, as a result of several factors. Nixon's distrust of bureaucracy, budget crises caused by the Vietnam War, the turmoil of the war itself, disillusionment with the Great Society (particularly in the area of civil rights), and Watergate all generated a gradual

but deepening popular disenchantment with Washington. Jimmy Carter capitalized on this sentiment in his 1976 run for the White House. He successfully campaigned on a theme of reining in an "unaccountable and unresponsive" bureaucracy (Aberbach & Rockman, 1990, p36).

Ronald Reagan was elected by promising to get government off the people's backs and moved decidedly in that direction upon taking office. Merging Jimmy Carter's distrust of Washington with Nixon's suspicions of bureaucracy's motives, he employed fiscal means to curtail the scope of the federal government. The operating philosophy of government changed from "how can it be done" to "how can it be cut" (Aberbach & Rockman, 1990, p39). This philosophy was an element of the President's overall strategy of crippling government activism.

President Bush did not appear to loathe bureaucracy quite as much as his predecessor but still professed loyalty to the doctrine that the country needed less government. His frequently articulated doubts about government's ability to effectively solve the country's problems are curious in that his resume certainly categorizes him as a Washington insider. He also easily lapsed into bureaucratic bashing while campaigning. His proposal for a 5% pay cut for government workers making more than \$75,000 a year stands out as an example of his efforts to play to anti-Washington sentiment. He was aware that only Congress had the authority to initiate the pay cut at the time he made his pledge (Causey & Devros, 1992).

Ironically, the overwhelming success of Desert Storm may have laid the foundation for George Bush's defeat in the 1992 election. Mark Shields (1991) theorized that the resounding victory of the coalition forces restored the faith of the American public in the effectiveness of their government. The party favoring an activist role for government has traditionally been the Democrats. Since the public sensed George Bush's lack of vision or core values, Shields argued, the public turned to the Democrats when it sought remedies for the nation's other problems.

Bill Clinton certainly personifies the party of more government. At the core of many of his programs to rejuvenate America is public sector involvement. During the campaign he called for a leaner, more effective government but maintained a positive tone, pledging to "never bash public employees" (cited by Barr, 1992, p2). The good will generated by his public endorsement of the value of government, however, dissipated when he announced his economic plan. The proposed 1994 pay freeze, followed by several years of smaller pay raises, seems to many federal workers to be a disproportionate "contribution" to easing the federal deficit. Thus the initial optimism caused by his positive assessment of government activism has been transformed to widespread resignation that the bureaucrat is still a convenient political scapegoat. The reaction of Stuart Smith, an official of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, is typical. Comments Smith: "The new

administration sounds like business as usual. This is the type of public employee bashing we have heard for the last 12 years of Republican administrations" (cited by Jenkins, 1993, pC1).

CURRENT STATE OF THE NATION'S BUREAUCRACY

As illustrated by the earlier anecdote concerning The Washington Post definition of red tape, the term bureaucracy carries a negative connotation for most Americans. This section of the paper will attempt to define the current state of our bureaucracy in terms of its image, its effectiveness, and its ability to hire good people.

Bureaucracy's Image

The bureaucracy has served as an inexhaustible source of fraud, waste, and abuse stories for politicians and the press. "Sixty Minutes" gets high ratings, and congressmen (and presidents) win elections, by lampooning inept and insensitive government officials. The following stories and comments are illustrative of the prevailing public attitude about government and contribute to its widespread negative image:

- The Department of Health and Human Services sent fifteen chimpanzees to a Texas laboratory for the purpose of launching a chimp breeding program. All were males (Goodsell, 1985).

- A woman on welfare ran up astronomical medical bills because of a terminal illness. She was denied Medicaid on grounds that her welfare payments created a monthly personal income \$10.80 above the eligibility maximum (Goodsell, 1984).

- Newspaper headlines reading: "Incompetent Official...", "Tangled in Red Tape", "Uncaring Bureaucrat...", "shuffled from office to office" (Holzer, 1991).

- An associate director of the Office of Personnel Management stated the following concerning federal employees: "Most federal workers need only be competent... the federal government is able to hire the caliber of people it needs at current wage levels and could do so at even lower pay scales. It should be content to hire competent people, not the best and most talented people." (Holzer, 1990, p4)

Academia has not treated bureaucracy any more favorably. In the forefront of the "bureaucracy is bad" camp are market oriented economists, functional sociologists, and policy analysts, all of whom believe that government routinely delivers poor performance in their respective areas of expertise. Academics have also assaulted bureaucracy on the grounds that it is a dangerous manipulator of political power and oppresses individual workers (Goodsell, 1984).

The bureaucracy has expanded in those areas in which the public has called for new services. Our expectations, and demands, for everything from entitlements to environmental protection have spawned big government, and a big bureaucracy to go with it. A consequence is that "... the functional elements of bureaucracy - specialization, hierarchy, rules, managerial direction, impersonality and careerism - if overdone turn dysfunctional and counter-productive, alienating employees and clients. Its virtues become vices" (Caiden, 1990, p490). The very nature of big government thus fuels attacks on the competency of bureaucrats.

Proof that the media, academia, and politicians are fostering an unfavorable picture of government service abounds, and the reader likely requires little more evidence to substantiate that assertion. The government's ability to recruit is diminished by a widespread negative perception. This is especially obvious when OPM officials, for example, see no need to hire talented bureaucrats.

Government Effectiveness

Is government as bad as it is frequently portrayed? Although a comprehensive answer to this question is beyond the scope of this paper, it deserves a partial answer before I can expand the theme that we are no longer hiring the quality of people necessary to run an effective government.

Charles Goodsell wrote The Case for Bureaucracy, A Public Administration Polemic (1984) as a strong defense of bureaucracy's effectiveness. He claims that bureaucracy's detractors are motivated by politics, self interest, or are simply rationalizing their personal failures. He cites, as an example, the need of liberals to portray bureaucracy as responsible for the failure of government social programs, while for conservatives these same programs represent the excesses of big government - meddling officials funded by high taxes. Government is effective, Goodsell asserts, and he substantiates his belief with data from opinion polls and surveys. Bureaucracy

"... lives up to acceptable standards of efficiency, courtesy and fairness... the basic

conclusion of satisfactory citizen treatment as the norm rather than the exception flies radically in the face of most literature on the subject. Citizens have an understanding of bureaucracy that those of us who 'know' about it professionally seldom seem to attain" (p140).

Goodsell's defense of bureaucracy has merit, and he may be right when he says that the average bureaucrat is performing well and is appreciated by the average citizen receiving services. There are, however, several published studies that question the notion that "all's well" with the bureaucracy. The most definitive of these studies is the Volcker Commission Report of 1989.

The National Commission on the Public Service was formed in 1987 to prepare action recommendations to the President and Congress to address what they saw as a "quiet crisis" in government. Its 36 members, under the chairmanship of Paul A. Volcker, former Federal Reserve Board Chairman, consisted of individuals with broad experience in public and private life, notably as President, Vice President, Senators, Representatives, corporate executives, and university presidents.

The Commission's report, issued in 1989, had the following hard-hitting indictment in its first page:

"... there is evidence on all sides of an erosion of performance and morale across government in America.

Too many of our most talented public servants - those

with the skills and dedication that are hallmarks of an effective career service - are ready to leave. Too few of our brightest young people - those with the imagination and energy that are essential for the future - are willing to join" (p1).

The Commission addressed three primary themes: leadership, talent, and performance. It noted significant weaknesses in each of these areas. I have discussed leadership and performance in earlier sections of this paper, but several comments in the report on these topics are noteworthy. On the subject of Presidential leadership and its impact on the public service, the Commission stated that "... positive Presidential leadership is the sine qua non of a strong public service" (p11). Frank Carlucci, former Secretary of Defense, provided the Commission with the following insight as to the role the President should play:

"If I as a CEO were to say that I have loafers, laggards, and petty thieves working for me, one could hardly expect my people to perform. Nor would such talk inspire customer confidence; indeed they would wonder about us as a company and about me as a CEO" (cited, p12).

The Commission addressed performance by acknowledging that many public servants are excelling in executing their daily responsibilities, but expressed serious concern over an "... erosion in the quality of America's public service" (p2).

Defense procurement scandals, crippled nuclear weapons plants, near misses in air traffic control, and the savings and loan scandal were cited as dramatic examples of the government's inadequacy in "meeting perceived needs" (p2).

Recruiting

Recruiting is the third aspect I will review in evaluating the the current state of our bureaucracy. In discussing talent, the Volcker Commission report emphasized the difficulty that government is experiencing in attracting quality recruits. This failure to recruit the best and the brightest is evidenced by:

- Waning student interest in public life. Committee member Derek Bok, president of Harvard, noted that in 1988 only 7% of Harvard's seniors had expressed an interest in government.

- Belief that public service is a career of last resort. A survey of honor society members in 1988's college class showed that more than 70% said the federal government does not offer a good chance for responsibility early on in one's career and that 86% said a federal job would not allow them to use their abilities to the fullest.

- Failure to communicate a positive message about the "value of public life and the intrinsic rewards of government service".

- A recruiting system that is "slow; it is legally trammelled and intellectually confused; it is impossible to explain to potential candidates. It is almost certainly not fulfilling the spirit of our mandate to hire the most meritorious

candidates" (Horner, cited by Volcker, p29).

- An ineffective minority recruiting program.

These are but a few of the deficiencies in a recruiting process, the Commission definitively states, that is no longer able to recruit a talented work force.

More Evidence

It is of course possible that the Volcker Commission's report is wrong. The members may have been merely executing their own agenda and therefore not delivered an accurate report. It is also possible that reforms have corrected the numerous deficiencies listed by the Commission and the state of recruiting has improved considerably.

Unfortunately, considerable evidence exists, much of it recent, that makes it possible to conclude that the federal government was not and is still not recruiting effectively.

- "... The Government is not perceived as an 'employer of choice' by many graduates of some of the country's most highly rated academic institutions." This verdict was reached by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) in its 1988 study "Attracting Quality Graduates to the Federal Government: A View of College Recruiting" (pVII).

- The MSPB study "Federal Personnel Management Since Civil Service Reform: A Survey of Federal Officials" stated that their survey results provided "limited evidence that agencies may not be as concerned about the supervisory excellence of first line management as is necessary to ensure effective and efficient

management of the work force" (1989, p21).

- Treasury, Justice, NASA, EPA, and The National Institutes of Health have all been cited by current and former officials as suffering dropoffs in performance as experienced employees are replaced by a lower quality of recruit (Garland, 1989). The Volcker Commission's conclusions thus appear to be substantiated.

CAUSES

The biggest obstacle facing the government in its effort to recruit top flight personnel is the public image of bureaucracy. This point has been stressed throughout this paper and I will now turn to other factors contributing to the declining quality of new employees. Three primary ones are recruiting and hiring methods, pay inadequacy, and the poor quality of life.

Recruiting and Hiring

The federal government's recruiting efforts lack coherency and organization. The process tends to be "internally decentralized and fragmented", with a "hidden job market" comprising as many as 75% of all job openings. (Krannich, C. and Krannich, R., 1986, p95) Potential applicants are frequently discouraged by an information system that provides neither accurate job listings nor clear application procedures. Individual agencies are not fully integrated into the development of OPM recruitment initiatives and generally do not have the authority to hire directly for a majority of management, administration, and policy making jobs (U.S. MSPB, 1990). A significant deficiency exists in that many government recruiters are simply do not excel in their work: they typically lack the expertise and presence found in their private sector counterparts. Exacerbating this deficiency is the fact that 60% of the 236 federal departments and agencies have no recruiting budget (Heilemann, 1990).

The formal hiring and application process is painful. It is structured to cause delay and inefficiency. For example, a student passing the Administrative Careers with America exam, the third step in applying for a job, must place his or her name on a waiting list until contacted by an agency. This wait may be as long as nine months and the agency making contact may not be the agency in which the student was originally interested (Heilemann, 1990). Such an extended waiting period would obviously discourage the top quality job-seeker, especially when he or she is being actively pursued by firms able to immediately place an offer on the table. Even if a candidate were to stumble upon a job of interest, he or she may discover that many quality jobs (30%) are structured for specific people and not legitimately competitive. Obtaining a quality position requires therefore that a job seeker be familiar with the hidden job market and its accompanying informal hiring process. Few applicants are initially aware that personnel officers do not actually perform hiring functions: the real hiring decisions are made at operational levels. To get the right job, the enterprising individual must execute the following steps: 1. Research federal agencies of interest; 2. Focus on a selected number of agencies for more detailed research; 3. Make contacts with and interview agency personnel; 4. Apply for desired position, submitting a tailored Personal Qualifications Statement (SF 171); 5. Arrange interview with hiring authority (Krannich, C., Krannich, R., 1986).

Such a procedure may sound rather straightforward: a young, hard-charging job seeker should be able to find a good position. In actuality, it is a confusing difficult maze. As a test case, Senator David Pryor (D-OK) dispatched staffers to various federal agencies to seek employment. They encountered a stereotypical government hiring system: out of date job listings, rude personnel officers, inefficient hiring systems. John Heilemann of the Economist, who cited Pryor's experience, personally tested the hiring process by calling the College Hotline, visiting agency personnel offices, and reviewing job postings. He labelled the system a "hopeless quagmire" (1990, p44).

Pay

As a rule, pay comparisons between public and private sector workers show that federal workers are underpaid for equal work. General Schedule Pay fell almost 25% in real dollars (Consumer Price Index) between 1969 and 1988 (Lewis, 1991). A Labor Department survey highlights the point that most federal jobs from GS-1 to GS-18 pay 22% to 40% less than comparable jobs in the private sector (Moore, 1991). "Half the federal government's personnel officers say that inadequate compensation has become a significant hindrance in attracting the people they need" (Volcker, 1989, p34.) In a striking example of this trend, federal agencies were advised not to participate in a college job fair because federal salaries were simply not competitive. The agencies would be wasting theirs and the students' time (Fay & Risher, 1991). The following statement by Griffin Bell, former

U.S. Attorney General, summarizes the issue well:

"The current salary levels of our government threaten our ability to generate and attract the most talented, creative, and able individuals of our citizenry to governmental service. We must not continue to rely on a system that attracts to public service those who by family sacrifice or preexisting wealth harken to the call to contribute to the democratic good. We of course must have the idealistic, but we also need the experienced, the able, and the wise" (cited by Volcker, 1989, p35).

Quality of Life in Public Service

Quality of life is a somewhat nebulous concept to cite as a cause for government's recruiting difficulties. It is an important concept, however, since the quality of life, of which a prime component is job satisfaction, is the only remaining reason to work for the government. Picture today's civil servant: poorly paid with respect to their civilian counterparts, working or managing programs that have been severely cut back, dedicated to a profession not respected by the public, and suffering under partisan management by political appointees. Why hang on, or, why encourage others to sign up?

People will work for the government because they regard it as important work. The Volcker Commission spoke of the importance of developing a culture of performance: developing commitment to an organization by concentrating on organizational

cultures and values causes employee motivation (Romzek, 1990). Since the public employee places a higher value on doing work that is helpful to others and in performing community service than the private sector worker (Wittmer, 1991), it is therefore vital that public service provide concrete feelings of accomplishment in these dimensions of job satisfaction. A 1989 GAO survey showing that only 13% of surveyed government employees would recommend a career in public service (Garland, 1989) demonstrates that our bureaucrats' motivational needs are not being met. This finding is discouraging to those searching for answers to the recruiting dilemma.

REFORMS

A considerable number of measures have been enacted in attempts to remedy the recruiting deficiencies cited in this paper. OPM initiated several such efforts in 1988, and the Volcker Commission Report in 1989 served to reinforce their importance. The results, as might be expected, have been mixed.

OPM Initiatives

OPM has made a concerted effort to attract more high-quality applicants. The office has expanded student hiring programs, such as the Presidential Management Intern Program, and developed proposals designed to accelerate and improve the selection process for entry level jobs. As part of an aggressive campus recruiting program, OPM created professional recruiting materials under the theme of "Career America" and developed more accessible and comprehensive information concerning government careers and the variety of jobs available. Finally, the Administrative Careers with America exam has been tailored by each agency for its specific needs and agencies have been granted direct hire authority.

The experience of Senator Pryor and John Heilemann in testing these initiatives has already been detailed. Recent GAO and MSPB studies cast further doubt upon the actual effectiveness of OPM reforms. In a 1990 study, although praising OPM's efforts, the MSPB noted "several obstacles which still must be dealt with if the Federal Government is to be viewed as an

employer of choice for more individuals" (1990, p1). Specifically, the study listed the still confusing application process and weak integration between OPM and individual agency recruiting efforts. The GAO, in a 1992 review of college placement offices, found that the majority of surveyed placement officials said campus visits by federal agencies had not increased since the 1989-1990 academic year. Additionally, one third had never heard of the much heralded Administrative Careers with America exams.

This evidence indicates that the mechanics of the recruiting and hiring process require further reform. The Volcker Commission recommended the steps of deregulating the hiring process by such means as granting agencies authority to set their own rules and improve information systems, expanding recruiting incentives, and increasing on the spot hiring of students. The opinion of this writer is that each agency must to fund a corps of dedicated, professional recruiters, loosely coordinated by OPM, as a first step to remedying weak recruiting.

Other Reforms

None of the three remaining factors highlighted as causes for substandard government recruiting, public image, pay, and quality of life, have witnessed a discernible improvement, or at least the attempt of improvement, that the recruiting and hiring process has. Substantial pay raises for certain designated scarce personnel and Senior Executive Service members have been implemented but a substantial overall pay disparity with the

private sector still exists. Under current law, a series of pay raises and regional cost of living adjustments, intended to help rectify a private and public sector pay disparity estimated at 30% by the Federal Government Service Task Force, was scheduled to be implemented over the next five years. The Clinton budget proposals will cost the typical Washington area federal worker \$25,000 by reducing these planned raises (Causey, 1993). The public stock of bureaucracy, as was reviewed earlier, is still low but has prospects for improvement, and the quality of life aspect of government service is strongly related to the role of government.

The three categories of public image, pay, and quality of life may be placed under the heading of professionalism. The bureaucrat must be regarded as a professional: by the President, by Congress, by the public, by his peers. Simple respect for the bureaucrat, especially by the President, is a start, but more substantive measures are required. Improving the Presidential Appointments process, making room in the White House for career civil servants, and decentralizing government management are specifics recommended by the Volcker Commission. Hugh Heclo lamented upon the "hollow center" (1984, p24) of America's senior civil service in noting the lack of career bureaucrats in top White House policy positions. The Commission's recommendations would make inroads in correcting that shortcoming and help establish the bureaucracy as a legitimate political institution.

The importance of education and a culture of performance are

vital components of this prospective profession. A factor as simple as government textbooks has a major impact on the development of attitudes in the prospective government work force. In their study "Bureaucracy in the Introductory American Government Textbook", Beverly Cizler and Heidi Neiswender (1991) reviewed 18 college textbooks published between 1980 and 1991 and found no mention of public service as a profession. They did find an increase in bashing of the permanent career bureaucrat. James Conant (1992) found a corresponding significant decline in enrollment in schools of Public Administration over the last decade. Upon combining these two pieces of information with the Volcker Commission's finding that 90% of college honor students never consider working in government, the trend is clear. Increasing student interest and awareness of public service is vital, and education that treats the bureaucrat as a professional is the foundation.

The culture of performance encompasses pay, education, and recruiting and has as its basis a commitment to the organization. Frederick Herzberg (1959) emphasized that the factors that make people happy in their work are different from those that make them unhappy. Low pay makes a public employee unhappy; satisfaction with the work itself makes him or her happy. It is possible to develop organizational commitment, and therefore growth and satisfaction with the job, without pay increases. (Balfour & Weschler, 1991) To accomplish this, and therefore attract motivated employees, a culture that demands competitive

performance, emphasizes productivity, improves the workplace, and provides training to succeed, must be established. (Volcker, 1989)

"We need to find good people, pay them competitive salaries, hold them accountable and let them produce. Given leadership and motivation, they will do the job."

(Bowsher, cited by Volcker, p32, 1989)

CONCLUSION

The poor state of government recruiting is perhaps symptomatic of government performance as a whole. As the public perception of the Washington bureaucrat has deteriorated, as programs have been cut back, government's overall performance, and naturally recruiting, have suffered. John Heilemann theorizes that Reagan ran up budget deficits and systematically undermined government recruiting with the same goal: crippling government activism:

"By making the process of getting a government job as cumbersome, slow, and red tape riddled as possible, the administration guaranteed that even the most determined would be bureaucrats would ultimately go scurrying off to interview at Salomon Brothers, or, worse, to apply to law school. That, of course, was exactly the idea" (Heilemann, 1990, p39).

Americans have come to depend on government too much for it to be crippled. The ills of the 90s cannot all be blamed on the excesses of the 80s, but an effective government will certainly have a role in correcting them. The array of issues facing President Clinton is intimidating: budget deficits, trade deficits, a health care crisis, drugs and crime, and the call for a new economic direction. An overwhelming amount of human and financial resources was dedicated to defeating the Soviet Union in the Cold War, and a similar degree of effort will be required

to hurdle the myriad of social and economic obstacles aligned against us today.

Our public servants will lead our effort against most of these problems. Private enterprise will play a major role, but our experience of the 80s proved that a laissez faire policy will not solve society's ills. History shows that the Great Society approach was not particularly successful either. The criteria for success in the coming decades, therefore, will be to develop an effective policy making and implementing cadre of civil servants that can apply their professionalism to addressing the nation's problems. These bureaucrats cannot be "the best of the desperate" (cited by Heilemann, 1990, p41). Although revisions in recruiting procedures have resulted in some improvements, for a true turnaround to take place in the government's ability to hire quality personnel, both the general public's attitude and the civil service's self image have to change. The consequences of not doing so are immeasurable. We need dedicated, competent professionals serving in government.

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